

## JOCHELSON THE KORYAK.

415

The Koryak tribe, taken as a whole, is at present, after the Chukchee, 164  
the healthiest of all the tribes of northeastern Siberia. Of the influence of  
civilization upon them, I shall speak in the last chapter.

THE SENSES. — The Koryak discriminate between people of their own 151  
tribe and those of another by their smell. Thus, for instance, they cannot  
stand the smell of a Russian house or of a Tungus tent. And I can say for  
myself, that, after an intercourse of many years with various Siberian tribes,  
I was able to recognize the characteristic smell of a Yukaghir, a Tungus,  
or a Yakut.

Their vision is very keen. They are able to distinguish objects, and  
recognize persons, at a distance at which I can see nothing. Near-sightedness  
is rare among them; and one would hardly find among them an instance of  
looking through half-closed eyes, so characteristic of near-sighted people. I  
did, however, meet with two or three cases of near-sightedness. Such persons  
felt helpless, and did not go out hunting, nor did they drive the first sledge  
of a train.

The Koryak dislike salty and bitter things. While the Yukaghir, Yakut, 151  
and Tungus frequently came to us for salt, the Koryak seemed to feel no  
need for it. Those people to whom I gave mustard to taste expectorated 262  
for quite a while.

They are very fond of hard biscuit; but many of them prefer the fresh,  
slightly sour rye bread baked by the Russians of that locality, and which I  
carried with me in a frozen state in bags. Before meal-time they put the  
bread before the fire to thaw it out. The sour and pungent taste of putrid  
fish and decomposing meat seems to tickle the Koryak palate.

They are very fond of sweet things, and sugar is in the greatest demand  
among articles of exchange. They compare the taste of sugar to that of  
reindeer-fat, or to the taste of the marrow of the reindeer leg-bones.

The Koryak like fat in all forms; as, for instance, fish-oil, reindeer-fat, the  
blubber of sea-animals, and the fat of other animals, but they cannot consume  
it in such quantities as the Yakut consume melted butter. Excessive use of 136  
the blubber of the spotted-seal (*Phoca ochotensis*) produces vomiting; and many  
of them cannot bear the smell of the blubber of the male of the ringed-seal.

The Koryak distinguish the following colors, — black and dark blue 151  
(called by one name, nu'uqen), white (ne'haqen), red (naye'ceqen), green, light  
blue, and coffee-color (nota'haqen), and yellow (mal'e'ceqen). When they 828  
are shown (for instance, on printed calico) the various colors intermediary  
between those enumerated, they class them among one or another of the  
above. Red is regarded as the most beautiful color. Faces with ruddy  
cheeks are considered handsome. Soft light-brown hair and brown eyes are  
valued as marks of feminine beauty. Dark eyes and coarse black hair in a  
woman are looked upon as signs of ill-nature.